

CLARIFICATION ON THE TAXONOMY OF *MYOTIS KEENI* AND *MYOTIS SEPTENTRIONALIS*

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The U.S. National Park Service (NPS) is undertaking a program to inventory and monitor vertebrates and vascular plants in 270 NPS units across the United States, including nine units in the western Great Lakes region. This process requires that scientists examine closely the range of each species and resolve any discrepancies in nomenclature. Early records of bats sometimes refer to *Myotis keenii* as a species existing in the Great Lakes region. In this note, I clarify the taxonomy of this species and conclude that the NPS should use the name *Myotis septentrionalis* as the accepted scientific name for all current and historical records in the Great Lakes region.

Miller and Allen (1928) revised and consolidated the classification of many North American bats. They noted that *Vespertilio subulatus keenii* was originally described by Merriam in 1895 from specimens taken in the Queen Charlotte Islands of British Columbia, Canada. Further, they noted that in 1897, Trouessart, in a German publication described a new species, *Vespertilio septentrionalis*, from a specimen taken in Halifax, Nova Scotia (the original publication is not available to cite). Miller and Allen (1928) argued that 1) the bats described by Trouessart and by Merriam were subspecies of the same species and 2) these bats probably belonged in the genus *Myotis*. Hence, the name *Myotis keenii* dates from 1928.

Miller and Allen (1928) argued for two subspecies—*Myotis keenii keenii* and *Myotis keenii septentrionalis*—representing the bats originally described by Merriam and by Trouessart, respectively. In their opinion *M. k. keenii* occurred west of the Rockies, in southern Alaska and British Columbia, whereas *M. k. septentrionalis* occurred from the east coast, across the prairies, to the Rocky Mountains. Van Zyll de Jong (1979) subsequently analyzed many specimens from Canada and concluded that the two proposed subspecies were actually separate species. He argued that the group of western bats should continue to be named *Myotis keenii*, because the name “keenii” was applied to the western populations first, back in 1895. The former subspecies *M. k. septentrionalis*, became *Myotis septentrionalis*, since *septentrionalis* was the oldest available name for the eastern group.

Van Zyll de Jong’s (1979) opinion has been accepted by most mammalogists in North America (but see Koopman 1994). Hence, in keeping with current taxonomic consensus, I recommend that all specimens east of the Rockies be called *Myotis septentrionalis*. References to *Myotis keenii* in the NPS data for the Great Lakes region simply refers to specimens collected prior to 1979, or reflect a conservative taxonomic opinion.

Literature cited:

Miller, G. S., Jr., and G. M. Allen. 1928. The American bats of the genera *Myotis* and *Piznyz*. Bull. U. S. Nat. Museum 144.

Van Zyll de Jong, C. G. 1979. Distribution and systematic relationships of long-eared *Myotis* in canada. Can. J. Zool. 57:987-994.

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